

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

In CHRIST-CHURCH

B E F O R E

His Excellency the Lord Deputy,

AND THE

Honorable House of Peers,

October the 8th. 1695.

Being the Day Appointed for a Solemn Thanksgiving for
the Taking the Strong Cittadel of NAMUR,

And for the other happy Successes of His Majesty's Forces,
and those of His Allies in *Flanders* this Campaign,

By EDWARD, Lord Bishop of Down & Connor.

DUBLIN,

Printed for William Norman, Eliphal Dobson, and Patrick
Campbell, Booksellers. 1695.

Thursday, the 10th of October, 1695.

By the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament Assembled.

Ordered,

That the Earl of *Drogheda*, and the Lord Viscount *Blessington*, do give the Thanks of this House to the Lord Bishop of *Down* for his Sermon Preached before this House at *Christ-Church* on *Tuesday* last, being the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving for his Majesty's, and his Allies, so great Success in Taking the Town and Castle of *Namur*, and preserving His Majesty's sacred Person from the many dangers to which he was so frequently expos'd during the Siege; and that his Lordship be desired to cause his Sermon to be Printed.

Gerard Bor. Cler.

Parliamentor.

07-1609

By EDWARD, Lord Bishop of Down & Connor.

Printed for William Newman, Bishop of Down, and Patrick Campbell, Bookellers. 1695.

A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

In Christ-Church, &c.

Psal. 135. later part of the 20th Verse.

Ye that fear the Lord, Bless the Lord.

THE Psalm out of which I have chosen these words, is a Hymn of Praise; and it is observable in the manner, or stile of these Hymns, that the Composer generally calls upon all around him, upon irrational, and inanimate things, sometimes, as well as upon persons, to joyn with him, in the Encomium of the great person whom he celebrates; and the holy Psalmist, who very well understood all the Schemes and Elegancies of Poesie, sometimes does the like, as when he calls upon *every thing that has breath*, upon the *Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Mountains and Rivers*, to praise the Lord. But in this Psalm he calls upon those who are under a more strict and peculiar obligation, as well as acted by a more Zealous, and ready Disposition, to praise him. The *Servants* of the Lord, such as *stand in the house of the Lord*, in the *Courts of the house of his God*. Then he goes on to describe the great and mighty things, that God had done for his People, the *Tokens and Wonders*, the *Mercies and Deliverances*, the

Victories and Successes over their numerous, and powerful Enemies : From thence he proceeds to despise, and deride the silly Idols of the Heathens, and to shew that it is the greatest folly and stupidity in the World, to expect any thing like these from them; That those that *make 'em*, are *like unto 'em*, and so are all *they that put their trust in 'em*. And at last he calls upon those who were the remarkable Objects, as well as the living Monuments of God's goodness and mercy, to join with him. That the whole *House of Israel*, especially the *House of Levi*, would bless the Lord : That all that *fear him*, that is every one, that has a true Sense of Piety, would show it, in the Exercise of this great Duty of publick worship, invocation, and praise of his most holy Name, for his goodness and mercy. *Ye that fear the Lord, Bless the Lord.*

Where we are not to understand by fear, that awful, uneasy passion of dread, and terrour, which is apt to arise from a conception of the divine Justice and Vengeance, but we are to take it in a larger Sense, for a certain habit, or disposition of mind, that inclines men to a Religious Reverence of the divine Essence and Attributes. The holy Scripture understand's sometimes, by the fear of the Lord, the whole of Religion, *Gen. 20. 11. Surely the fear of God, is not in this place.* These are the words of Abraham, who was afraid that the men of Gerar would slay him upon the account of his Wife, because they had no sense of Religion amongst 'em; The wise man tells us, that the *fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge* : and the Psalmist calls men to him, that he may teach them the *Fear of the Lord*, that is, that he may instruct 'em in the duties of Religion, nay sometimes the holy Writers express by the fear of the Lord, some acts of the mind, that are exclusive of that passion : *Prov. 14. 26. In the fear of the Lord, is strong Confidence,* and *Alt. 9. 31.* We are told of walking in the *Fear of the Lord*, and *Comfort*. Now *Comfort*, and *Confidence*, having nothing to do with *Fear*, according to the usual strict Sense of the word ; by the fear of the Lord in these places must needs be meant a habit of Piety, or that Religious Respect, and Reverence that is due to God.

And as we are not to take fear in this place, in the strict Sense of the word; So neither are we to understand by blessing the Lord, the bare act of praising his holy Name with our lips only, which is a thing may possibly be done when our hearts are far from him, but a firm settl'd habit of thankfulness for all his Favours, which upon fit and proper occasions, shall break out into such acts as denote our honour, and esteem of him before men, and our Zeal for his Glory; such as publick declarations of our gratitude, for his general favours towards us, and our solemn praises and thanksgivings, for his more immediate and extraordinary Mercies, and Deliverances.

The Words being thus understood, offer to our consideration these two things, 1st here is a duty injoynd, to *Bless the Lord.* 2^{dly}. Here is a certain habit or disposition of mind, which they are suppos'd to have, that are call'd upon to this duty, and that is *The Fear of the Lord.* Now because this last is but suppos'd here only, and the former is look'd upon as a consequent of it, I shall begin with the later; That habit of Religious Worship and Reverence towards God, which is the foundation of the devotional part of Religion, concerning which, I shall inquire 1st, what are the seeds from whence it grows, or what are the considerations from whence sober and thinking men reason themselves into this habit of Piety and Devotion towards God.

2^{dly}, I shall consider the duty it self, of Blessing God, and in what it consists; and when this is done, I shall in the 3^d place endeavour to shew you that they who thus fear the Lord, are the fittest persons in the World to bless and praise him.

1st. Then, I look upon this habit of fearing God to be a dictate of the Law of Nature, as much as any part of the moral Law whatsoever, if we suppose the being of a God, which must be suppos'd, as the Foundation of all certain Truths, as well as of all Religion.

Now, as to the being of a God, the constant Sense, and practice of every Age, and Nation of the World, that we can have any manner of account of in story, do abundantly confirm this, inso-much as if here and there, an Atheist, or Anti-religionist be mention'd.

tion'd, he seems to stand upon Record, as some monstrous, and uncouth production, for which humane Nature, is not accountable, but it may be said perhaps that this sense of a Deity, and the pious regards, that have been constantly paid to it, is a notion invented, and instill'd, into the minds of men, by cunning Politicians, who found it difficult to Govern the World without it; I confess indeed, that to Govern the World without it, is not only difficult, but impossible, which is no disparagment, but a great honour to Religion, and a great Argument of the truth of it, but it does not therefore follow that it was contriv'd by Politicians; for besides that, it is very hard to conceive, that all the Politicians of every Age and Nation in the world should so luckily hit upon the same State Maxim, who differ almost in every thing in the world besides. I think it is sufficiently unaccountable, how the most rude and barbarous Nations, and such amongst 'em, as never convers'd with a Polititian in their lives, shou'd, upon the first dawning of Reason, discover this Notion in their minds, and express it in their practice.

It remains therefore, that Piety and Devotion towards God, and the necessity of our Addresses to him, which is the thing here express'd by the Fear of the Lord, is a dictate of the Law of Nature, and is indeed a Consequence easily deducible from our sense of our own wants, and of the divine goodness, and Power to redress 'em. And that these wants are great, and this goodness, and Power (to which we apply our selves for relief) infinite, are two of the first, and principal truths to which the humane understanding does clearly and distinctly attain.

But we Christians, whose understandings are assisted by an additional, and greater light, the Revelation of the will of God, made to us in his holy Word, are not only distinctly inform'd of this matter in general, but the nature of our wants, the several kinds, degrees, and occasions of 'em, the misery of our Condition, if they be not redress'd, the infinite power, and unspeakable mercies of God, the great and signal instances of his favour to sinful men, his kind, and gracious invitations of those who have provok'd him, and his promise

mise of receiving 'em, as oft as they make their applications in the way that he has prescrib'd, are all reval'd to us in Scripture, and every one of these, is a clear, and forcible Argument upon us, to fix in our minds this *Fear of the Lord*, this habit of Reverence, and this resolution of waiting upon him in his holy Ordinances, for a supply and continuance of his benefits.

If we look into our wants, they are such, as either relate to our *Spiritual*, or *Temporal* Conditions.

Our *Spiritual* Condition is very deplorable by the fall of our first Parents, and by that *semes peccati*, as the School-men call it, which they have communicated to our Natures. It has like a strong disease, corrupted our whole mass, and spread it's ill influence thro' all the faculties of our souls. It has blinded our understandings with error and prejudice, and perverted our wills, with our lusts & passions, insomuch that scarce our most holy duties, are free from some or other ill consequence of this unhappy State. This is the cause, why, *when we are about to do good, evil is present with us*, this is the *War in our members*, this is the *Carnal lust that resists the Spirit*, and is *at Enmity with God*. A sett of Expressions, that do extremely well represent the great power that this pollution of our Natures has upon us, and seem to intimate, that our slavery under it, is so great, that it comes near to destroy, even the freedom of our wills: In short, this is it which in our Prayers, deads our Faith, our fervency, our trust, and affiance in God, and our close attention upon that holy duty. This is it that casts in impertinent thoughts, loose desires, wrong ends, and the like, which are as so many blemishes in our Sacrifice. This is it that in our hearing, or reading the divine truths, possesses our minds with prejudice, inadvertency, misapplication, and sometimes with down-right Infidelity, which makes it a *Savour not of Life unto Life, but of Death unto Death*, to minds so fatally corrupted. In fine, this is it that in our most serious meditations upon our great eternal concern, make us light, and unsettl'd, driving to no point, or issue, fixing no firm, immoveable Resolution of a sincere uniform obedience to the will of God.

Against this deplorable condition, we have no relief, but by our applications and addresses to the Throne of Grace, zealous, and frequent acts of which, make up this habit of Piety, or fear of the Lord, which makes us acquainted with his great and glorious Attributes, as that his infinite power makes him able, and his infinite goodness willing to relieve us, which he does by sending the Comforter, the blessed Spirit of Grace, by whose assistance and influence, we have full redress of all our wants, and hardships. This powerful influence of the Spirit of God, like a good medicine, diffuses its vertue every where, applies it self to every disaffected part: It bears down before it the dulness, and prejudice of our understandings, with the strength and clearness of the divine truths, and with a sweet and endearing violence, it sets upon our wills, and conquers our unruly affections, and subdues 'em to the obedience of Faith. This efficacy of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, is call'd by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, the writing the Law in the heart, and putting it into the inward parts: It is call'd by our Saviour, the Father's teaching, the holy Spirit's convincing men, of sin, of righteousness, and judgment: and the Apostle *St. Paul* calls it, the spiritual revelation of Wisdom, out of the Word, unto the Conscience. And thus I have shew'd you the reasonableness and necessity of Piety, or the devotional part of Religion, which is here call'd the Fear of the Lord, with regard to our spiritual wants, and the way of redressing 'em.

Our temporal wants will be considered, either as we are single persons, or as we are united into a Body-Politick, under the same common Laws and Government.

As to our temporal wants, which concern us, as we are single persons, they are such as make us to depend upon providence, for the smallest things we enjoy. The very preservation of our Beings, is but a continued creation, which makes infinite providence as necessary to preserve, as infinite power to create us. The common accidents of humane life, are so obvious, and yet so unavoidable, that no man living can either by his wisdom foresee, or by his power and greatness prevent 'em. The health and vigour of the strong, the plenty of the rich, and the honours of the great and power-

powerful, are such, as the possessors of 'em cannot command their stay ; nay, whilst they do enjoy 'em, they generally have those cares, and anxieties to attend 'em, that usually embitter the sweetest of 'em. We have read indeed of a certain perfect happiness, which a wise man was to create within himself, even in this world, without any regard to any thing without him, or above him : to arrive at which, did sufficiently exercise the wits, and expose the follies of some of the ancient Philosophers, amongst whom, some were to feel no pain in a fitt of the Gout or Stone ; nor to know any difference between *Phalaris's Bull*, and a cool *Grotto* : All which was but a meer notion, that never came to any more than a few empty words : For some of the great pretenders to it have shew'd themselves but men, and weak ones too ; in some of the ordinary hardships and calamities of humane life : Contentment with our condition, (tho a thing much talk'd of by many, and tho many specious Rules are laid down for the attainment of it) being scarce ever known on this side Heaven, insomuch that nothing can possibly make any condition of life easy, or supportable to any man, that has not an eye to something that can ease him of the difficulties that attend the acquisition, and of the griefs and anxieties that follow the loss of these worldly enjoyments ; and that must be no other, than that great and glorious Being who commands 'em all, and disposeth of 'em as seems best to his *Godly Wisdom*. And who-soever fixeth this Principle in his mind, and acts in pursuance of it, that creat's ease, and satisfaction to himself, from the knowledge & contemplation of this Wise and Almighty Being, and from an intire trust, and dependance upon him, who has commanded him to make his addreses to him, and has promis'd to answer 'em ; that's the wise man ; that's he, that observes and considers well, what God commands by the mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah* : *Let not the wise man glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his Riches, but let him that glory's, glory in this, That he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise Loving-kindness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth.*

Neither

Neither do we stand less in need of the goodness, mercy, & bounty of God, as we are united into Societies, and bodies politic, under the same common Laws, and Government, than as we are single persons. Peace, plenty, trade, and commerce, fidelity, justice, amity, union of interests and affections amongst our selves, a hearty zealous concern for the publick weal, success of our negotiations with our Allies and Friends, and victory over our Enemies, being all the Blessings of Heaven; and as needful for the support of a Kingdom, or Common-wealth, as food, raiment, health of body, and tranquility of mind for the behoof of any single person. To whom then are we to apply our selves for all or any of these, but to that great and glorious Being, who has perfect knowledge, and wisdom to understand our wants, unspeakable love, and goodness to incline him, and Almighty power to enable him to relieve us. Perfect Knowledge, for his *understanding is infinite*, unspeakable love, and goodness; for he has told us that his *mercy is over all his works*, that he is the *helper of the friendless*, and tho' our Father and Mother *forsake us*, yet will not he; and Almighty Power, because we are assur'd that *all power belongs to God*, that the *Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength*, and whatsoever he pleases he do's, *both in Heaven, and Earth, and in the Sea, and in all deep places.*

And these are the reasons, directions, and encouragements to this great duty, of *fearing the Lord*, or that habit of Devotion, or Piety to God, which is here suppos'd in those who are call'd upon to *bless the Lord*. We have discover'd it to be a dictate of the Law of Nature, and that it is founded upon the sense of our own wants, both spiritual and temporal, and the wisdom, power and goodness of God to redress 'em.

I come now to consider the Duty it self, of *Blessing God*. Concerning which, I shall shew you first, wherein it consists. And then I shall shew you, that they that *fear the Lord*, are the only persons rightly qualify'd for the performance of this duty.

By *Blessing the Lord* then, We understand in this place, our doing him all possible Honour in our thoughts, words and actions,
and

and zealously endeavouring, every one in his station, that others may do him honour.

The ingredients of honour, are Love and Fear, and its object is goodness and Power united. Goodness without Power beget's Love only; and Power without Goodness beget's nothing but a slavish Fear, but both together, beget a certain affectionate Reverence and Esteem, which we call honour. If this regard be confin'd to the thoughts only, it is no other, than a high estimation of those Excellencies and Perfections, with which he is so eminently endow'd, as to deserve our Love and Reverence. If it break out into words, it becomes either praise, or thanks, and these denote our design to let others know the esteem we have for the person whom we honour, together with the grateful sense we have of his past Favours, and our readiness to make the best returns we can for any other, that he shall from time to time vouchsafe to confer upon us; but when it proceeds from Words to Actions, then it shews that we are in earnest, then we shew the truth and sincerity both of our hearts and words, and that we are resolv'd to omit no occasion, of demonstrating to the World, the value we have for him whom we honour: And this is what is expected even by mortal men, to whom we pay this regard, and consequently cannot be deny'd to God, in a more eminent manner, that is, in due proportion to his infinite power, and goodness. And tho' that honour that is confin'd to the thoughts (being no more than a due estimation of those Excellencies, and Perfections that are in God, especially his goodness and power) does at first appear to bean act of the Judgment only, and proceeding from a faculty that is not free, do's not seem to deserve the name of a duty, can claim no praise, nor expect a reward, yet such is the connexion of the will, and the understanding, and such is their dependance, one upon another, in their operations, that they frequently partake of the virtues, and defects of each other, and not only the understanding guides the will, but the will inclines and disposes the understanding, to good, as well as to evil acts, or else why should infidelity be a Sin, and Faith a Vertue, but that they are so, is certain: For the Scripture plainly declares 'em to be such; and the reason

is plain, for as a docile and tractable disposition of mind, humility, the Love of Truth, and a hearty endeavour to attain it, do beget Faith. So Pride and ill Nature, a Stupid Sloath, Obstinacy, Prejudice, and a resolution to indulge our lusts and passions, are the Parents of Infidelity. We are not therefore to look upon that estimation of the Judgment, by which we honour God in our thoughts, to be without value, for it is an excellent indication, of a mind rightly dispos'd to the Love, and Fear of God, and the foundation or beginning of all the true Piety in the World. These honorable thoughts of the divine power, and goodness, have a vast and unbounded Subject to employ 'em. We can cast our eye upon nothing, whether in Heaven or Earth, or in the great deep, we can contemplate none of the great and amazing works of Art, or Nature, but they give us occasion to admire and adore him, and what Hypothesis, or System of the World have we seen that could give any tolerable account of the smallest appearance in Nature, without a God at the bottom of it? neither is his power and greatness less visible, in the moral, than in the natural World. The great and extraordinary occurrences, which have sometimes happen'd, contrary to the hopes and expectations of the most discerning men, such as as have defeated the power, and baffl'd the Councils, of the Wise and Mighty, and have had such demonstrations of an over-ruling providence, as sufficiently shew'd the hand from whence they came. These cannot but employ the thoughts, of those who honour God, and who must from hence reason themselves into this conclusion, that the Lord is great and powerful, that his Works are Wonderful, and that *there is no end of his Greatness*. Small and common matters, may pass unregarded, but when the *Arm of the Lord is made bare*, as the Prophet *Isaia* expresseth it, when it is *lift up, and stretched out*, who can but see it, and know it to be his? when these extraordinary works of providence, are such only, as denote his power, and greatness, then indeed the people ought to *bear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*. But when they are instances of his love and kindness too, this add's to our fear and reverence, such a proportion of Love and gratitude, as beget's the highest honour, and esteem of him, and warms

our affections towards him, to that degree, that we count all things dross in comparison of him.)

The holy Scripture gives us such an Idea of his power, and greatness, and of his mercy, and goodness, that it is an argument of the most strange stupidity in the world, not to be affected with it. Who can but fear and reverence the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders: Who ruleth over all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and in whose hand is such power, and might, that none is able to withstand him; the Lord God, to whom belongs Greatness, and Power, and Glory, and Victory, and Majesty, the Great, and Mighty, and Terrible God, who brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth as Vanity; who takes the Wise in their own craftiness, so that the counsel of the froward is carried headlong; who scatters his Enemies with a strong Arm; who can make the worm Jacob to thrash the Mountains, and beat 'em small, and make the Hills as chaff; who commands the Sun, and it riseth not, and seals up the Stars: Who is the only true and living God, and everlasting King; at whose wrath, the Earth doth tremble; the Nations are not able to abide his Indignation: Who, I say, can be so stupid, as not to have his mind constantly affected with the thoughts of such power and greatness; and who can be of so base and degenerate a frame of spirit, as not to be thoroughly affected likewise with a sense of his infinite goodness and mercy; to whom we owe our being, preservation, and all the benefits we enjoy, all the necessities, conveniences, and pleasures of this life, we have received from his bountiful hand: neither has he stopp'd here, but given us the reasonable renders, and well grounded hopes of a better life; who is not only merciful, and gracious, but liberal, and munificent: He not only pardons our sins, that makes us unworthy of his mercies, but upon our repentance, and amendment, he powers out his favours with a plentiful hand, gives freely, and upbraids no man, but keeps Covenant, and Mercy, and will never forsake them that seek him; who fills our hearts with food and gladness; who is the hope of Israel, and his Saviour, in the time of trouble; who has redeem'd us from the power of the Sword; and who will deliver us in six troubles, yea in seven, that no evil shall touch

When these exalted and affectionate thoughts concerning God do break out into words (as they undoubtedly will do, if the heart be truly affected with the divine Favors) they become that which we call Praise and Thanksgiving; Praise for his Power, and Greatness; and Thanksgiving for his Mercy, and Goodness; and these are the most noble and perfect parts of Divine Worship; for they are the employment of the blessed in Heaven, in which they spend Eternity. So that they who desire to go thither, methinks should take a great deal of care and delight to habituate themselves to that way of spending their time, which is to last with them for ever; for want of which, I am perswaded it is, that we generally see those who do not accustom themselves to this duty, nor take any pleasure in the performance of it, are so immers'd in this world, so burthen'd either with the pleasures, or the toyls of it, that as they seem to think of none but this world, so neither is it probable that they desire there should be any other: But they that *fear the Lord* (who have thoroughly consider'd his power and goodness, and that his promise of happiness cannot be made good to 'em in this life, where the greatest Riches, and Honours, have their troubles, and where the most refin'd pleasures do cloy and surfeit, those that most eagerly pursue 'em) have their minds employ'd in the search of more uoble, and exalted diversifements, and therefore they endeavour to have a tast of heaven, before they come there, which cannot be better done, than by imitation (as far as is possible) of those that wait upon the Throne of God, *singing hallelujahs to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever*: hence it is that in all well constituted Churches, Psalms, and Hymns of praise and thanksgiving, are a great and principal part of the publick worship, the decent and Solemn performance of which, gives the minds of the Congregation, such exalted notions of God, and has such an Air of Zealous piety in the manner of expressing 'em that they generally make the deepest impressions upon the imagination, and memory of any part of divine service.

This shews the necessity & reasonableness of publick praise, and the great and astonishing mercies that we have had at the hand
of

of God, both Spiritual, and Temporal, both private and publick, do ingage us to thanksgiving, which to an ingenuous mind is the most pleasant of all duties. *To hide the righteousness of God in his heart, and to conceal his loving kindness, and truth from the great Congregation, is what the Royal Psalmist would not do; no, he would publish it with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all his wondrous works, he was resolv'd to sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever, and with his mouth would he make known his faithfulness to all generations, he would praise the name of God with a Song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.* To which duty no Nation upon the Earth has had more reasonable, and frequent calls, than we. If Peace, Plenty, Liberty, and the most excellent constitution of Government in the world, both Civil, and Ecclesiastical, are Blessings, what Nation under Heaven has such reason as we have to adore and praise the divine goodness?

If when our crying sins, had justly provok'd God to turn his face away from us, he was pleas'd to turn again and revive us with the *light of his Countenance.* When *Arbitrary Power* (with a Jesuit in the prime Ministry to advise and direct it) was just ready to lay its Iron hands upon our Persons and Properties, and *Popery* with all its nonsense and contradictions, seem'd prepar'd and authoriz'd, to debauch, or force our Consciences: Then, for God to give us a King in his mercy, to protect us against these worst of evils: A King, whose hereditary *Right* to our Monarchy made him dear to the Loyal; and his Wisdom and Courage, formidable to the Turbulent, and Disaffected. A King, who seem'd fram'd by Heaven on purpose for this great Emergency; for we may be sure, that the *right hand which hath the preeminence; that right hand of the Lord, that brings mighty things to pass,* will chuse the fittest Instruments. A King who has answer'd this great design and call of Providence, by the most wise and effectual methods that we could wish or imagine, and restor'd us to Peace and Order, and the comforts of our wise and happy Government both Civil and Ecclesiastical, these are such marks of the Divine Favour, that we have reason to believe our selves the peculiar care of Heaven. If to preserve *the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord* from

the secret practices, and attempts, as well as from the open assaults of his, and our Enemies: *If to cover his Head in the day of battle: If to teach his hands to war, and his fingers to fight,* so, as to give him victory over the fiercest of 'em, if to give him the conduct, and courage to attack & defeat the boldest of their Troop, (as he has lately done) within their Walls and Retrenchments, be a mark of the divine favour; surely it is not only a reasonable, and necessary, but it is a *pleasant thing to give thanks*. He that can pretend to contain the sense of such mercies in his mind, without any publick demonstrations of 'em, must needs have but very slight touches of the Fear of the Lord, and but very weak and unactive notions of the *Operations of his hands*.

I hope none that hear me this day are so regardless of these mercies as not to consider from whose hands they come, how jealous he is of his honour, and how highly he will resent so black an ingratitude, as that of refusing to own 'em in publick; for a true and pious sense of these, can never be buried in the mind, but must shew it self in the congregation, in the voice of praise and thanksgiving to our great and glorious Benefactor.

But as we are to bless the Lord in our thoughts and words, we must do it likewise in our actions, which is but to tell you in other words, that there is a moral as well as a devotional part of Religion, by which we do not only glorify God our selves, but we take care, that others *seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in Heaven*, for if we consider God, as the Almighty Monarch, and wise Governor of the World, a sincere uniform practice of subjection to his will, and obedience to his known Laws, is the most natural expression of our honour to him, and the most acceptable; For

Let us suppose a Courtier train'd up in all the most exquisite Arts of Court Ceremony, and demeanour; so observant of every look, and motion of his Prince, as to do him all the services of attendance, and address that may be, never failing to attend his rising, and lying down, and so obsequious as never to miss any

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publick appearance that may do him Honour; and yet, at the same time, do's many extravagant, and illegal things, by oppression of his fellow-subjects, by extortion, bribery, or cruelty, to the disparagement and obloquie of the King and his Government. Such a person will never be so much lov'd, and valu'd by a wise Prince, as he that lives peaceably, justly and honestly in his station, observes the Laws of his Countrey, and promotes the observance of 'em by others, tho he do not always attend the King's presence, nor pay his Court so constantly, and obsequiously as the other. Our Saviour tells us of those, that have made *long Prayers, but have devour'd Widows Houses*, and we have heard of some, who when they went to seek the Lord, in a manner more solemn than ordinary, had always some great mischief to do: Such are so far from blessing, and glorifying God, that they bring a disgrace upon his Worship; they are so far from being friends to his Interest, that they make his Enemies to blaspheme him. *Solomon* tells us, that he that oppresses the poor, reproaches God; but that he honour's God, who has mercy upon the poor. The wise Son of *Syrach* tells us, that he that keeps the Law, brings Offering enough; and he that takes heed to the Commandment, brings a Peace-Offering; he that requites a good turn, offers fine Flower; and he that gives Alms, sacrificeth Praise; and that to forsake unrighteousness, is a propitiation.

And as this way of mens glorifying God by their Actions, is the sure way of making others to glorify him, so it is never more remarkably effectual, than when men in eminent Station and Authority, are exemplary for their Vertue and Piety. Their light is set upon a high Candlestick, and shines a great way, whilst that which is not set up, but lies low, is either not seen, or not regarded. When our Law-givers and Magistrates shall hear, and obey that call of the Royal Prophet; *Give unto the Lord O ye mighty, Give unto the Lord Glory, and Strength, Give unto the Lord the honour due unto his Name*; then will inferiour Persons quickly see, that there is a God, to whom they owe the same homage, which their superiours so readily pay him; but when not only the good *Lives* but the good *Laws*, of our Magistrates, do manifestly tend to the
Glory

Glory of God, and the promotion of Piety, then have we reason to believe, that God is in the midst of us, that he presides in our councils, and will influence all our actions, for the pulick good. I do not pretend to prescribe here, neither am I able to instruct the united wisdom of this Nation, in any of the Political part of their duty : all that I shall take upon me to say, is this, that there are two things very dear to God, his *Ministers*, and his *Worship* ; and I doubt not, but those whose business it is to settle affairs upon the best and and surest foundations, will take care of these in a peculiar manner.

And thus I have shew'd you what it is to *blefs the Lord*, it is to do him all possible honour our selves, in our thoughts, words and actions, and to endeavour, every one in his station that others may do him honour.

I come now to shew that they that *Fear the Lord*, are the only persons fit to perform this duty ; For a fool (that is in the Scripture Language a wicked man) does not understand this, an unwise man does not consider it, he has said in his heart, there is no God, and therefore is certainly very unfit to honour him ; he that would rob him of his Being, will pay but little deference to his Attributes : Nay, tho he were convinc'd of the being of a God, yet in doing him honour, he is so out of his element, all the principal acts of Piety lye so odd and untoward to his genius, and inclination, that we can expect from him but very low and worthless performances in this kind : for this thing being such as must not only deeply affect the thoughts, but shew it self in mens words and actions, no man must think to do it, in a slight or perfunctory manner; for it is one of the grand and principal businesses of human Life, and must be perform'd with all imaginable Zeal, and application. A hypocrite may for some by-ends, or to gain the reputation of Piety, attend the time, and place of publick praise and thanksgiving, but his heart being rotten, that vitiates all, and (tho it may deceive men) is of no value with God. A sensual libertine being perhaps tyr'd in the pursuit of his pleasures, or cloy'd
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with the enjoyment of 'em, may at his leisure. *Men* look inward a little, and by the light of Nature, (that *witness of himself*, which God has set up in the heart of every man) form some honourable thoughts of God; but these seldom break out into any acts of pure, and sincere devotion, much less into the spiritual and exalted ones of Praise and Thanksgiving. As for the sordid worldling, who by fraud, and cruelty, and by grinding the face of the poor, has *made haste to be rich*, he can have but little respect for the true God, having another God of his own: for the Scripture says he's an Idolater; he calls Justice, and Charity, but ill management, and the Service of God, loss of time; so that there is no sort of habitual impenitent sinner that can be any ways fitted for this duty. None but those that *Fear the Lord*, none but those that have fix'd in their minds true and genuine notions of his power and goodness: These are they whose *mouths will shew forth his righteousness and salvation* all the day long, and will say as we all have reason to do for his signal and repeated mercies, *Blessed be the Lord our God who only does wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious Name for ever: And let the whole Earth be fill'd with his Glory. Amen, Amen.*

FINIS.

